FAX

To: Examiner Uzma Alam, USPTO
Art Unit 2157

From: N. K, Ouchi

Dated April 12, 2005

Ref: 09/974,594

5 Pages plus cover letter

Examiner Alam ....

Attached are a discussion and new claims

My phone number is 408-757-5862

Thank you for your assistance.

N. K. Ouchi

Response to USPTO Office Action

Confirmation Number: 7077

Examiner: Uzma Alam

Art Unit: 2157

Title: File Based Workflow System and Methods

Application Number: 09/974,594

Inventor: Norman Ken Ouchi

Date: April 12, 2005

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 USC 112 for failing to point out and distinctly claim the subject matter.
Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Gondo et al (US Pub No 2003/0079186 A1) and Bengston (USP 6,728,947)
Action is not final

FIELD OF THE INVENTION
This invention is related to workflow systems to support the control and execution of business processes and in particular business processes where the information is in the form of files.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In the present invention, a business process is divided into steps where each step is executed by a person or program. A route is a representation of the sequence of steps in the process. The route can be used in a workflow system to control the execution of each step and track the progress of the route and hence the progress of the business process. Workflow systems have been applied to business processes where the information to be processed can be read on or entered into a computer screen. The present invention supports business processes where the information is in the form of computer files and the process steps are executed by users or programs that use files delivered by the workflow as input and produce files as output that are to be used in subsequent steps and deposited through the workflow screens for use in these subsequent steps. The invention provides for computer screens that direct specific files to be delivered and request specific files for deposit and provides for organization of the files to support the process implemented by the route.

Gondo teaches an information collection/proving systems which classifies information and manages it. Bengston teaches the use of a workflow file to provide workflow process information that is passed from process step to

process step rather than controlled by a central workflow system. Bengston does not teach processing of files.

Discussion

The object of Gondo is the collection of information, classification of the information, and dissemination of the information. The objective of Bengston is the use of a file that accompanies the information processed to control the process rather than control by a central workflow system.

The objective of the present invention is the controlled processing of information in the form of files where the business process is divided into process steps and represented by a route; each route step specifies the type of file for an input or for output; a screen is associated with a route step to download or upload the specified type of file as directed by the route step. Files collected using Gondo may be processed in a route controlled business process using the present invention. The actual file processing is external to the current invention, may be manual and not system controlled. The file classifications are for identification by people and later for machines. It is envisioned that a business process may begin using the manual file processing and evolve to an automated process when the file transformation processes are automated and system controlled.

The claims are rewritten to point out and distinctly claim the subject matter over Gondo and Bengston.

New claims are grouped 21-27, 28-35, and 36-40 where claims 21, 28, and 36 are independent claims.

The attention and assistance of the examiner is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted

Norman Ken Ouchi, Inventor